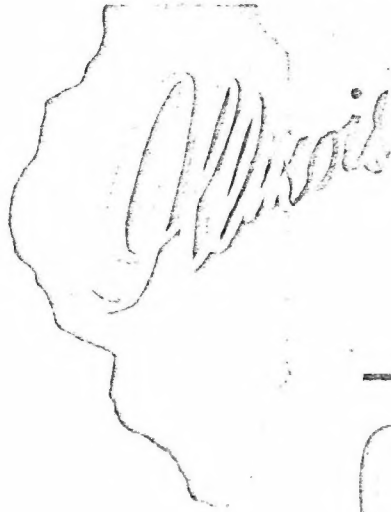


Property of Mrs. M. E. Spurgeon
710 Jaffee
Pinebrieville, Ill 62274

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STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY

Perry Co. Iron Casket Burial P/43
Underwood - Stone Reunion P/18

IRON CASKET BURIAL IN PERRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Mrs. M. E. Spurgeon, 710 Taffee Street, Pinckneyville, Illinois 62274

Perry County, Illinois, too, has its Iron Casket burial. This one differs from "Mr. Unknown" (Vol. VII, No. 3 Fall 1976 ISGS QUARTERLY) inasmuch as the story of his life was researched through Civil War, census, and county records, before exhumation was begun. When a subsidiary of Arch Minerals purchased land near Denmark, Perry County, Illinois, for strip mining purposes, a tombstone lying on the ground indicated that Sgt. Thomas HINDS, Co. D 110th Illinois Infantry, was buried there. Residents in the area had long known of this place which was called "Old Watkins Cemetery."

I was approached by a representative of the coal company in March of 1973 to begin research on this man in order that they might find heirs, if any, and obtain consent for removal of this grave or any others which might be found there. We began the search with Thomas HINDS, Sr. who died 27 August 1845 and no probate filed until 6 October 1845. In October only the widow, Jane HINDS, and two sons, Thomas HINDS, Jr. and Joseph HINDS, survived, yet court records show that Jane derived title in land through three children dying after their father, namely Joseph S. HINDS, a son, and Eliza and Mary J. HINDS, his daughters. It leads one to believe that the entire family may have suffered a serious disease, and the father died. Within a short time the two little girls also passed away, who were buried hastily on the farm (the father having been interred in the Cottom Cemetery at Denmark about one quarter mile away). Since the rest of the family may also have been sick, the mother was unable to get to Pinckneyville until October to take care of legal matters. Joseph S. HINDS lived to young manhood but died single, thus leaving only Jane HINDS, the widow, and one son, Thom. HINDS, Jr. as the only survivors of this family. Mrs. Jane HINDS married Alexander WATKINS 18 June 1847. She is buried at Cottom Cemetery with Alexander and her first husband.

Thomas HINDS, Jr. was born in the state of Delaware in 1834 and came to Perry County, Illinois about 1838 with his parents. The mother was a native of Scotland, and no doubt the father was also. Thomas was married 17 August 1854 to Miss Almedia THROOP, and to this union was born on 25 August 1855 a daughter, Sarah Jane HINDS. The marriage of Thomas and Almedia terminated in divorce, and Thomas then married Matilda E. UHLES in April of 1862. They became the parents of one daughter, Ida E. HINDS, born on Christmas Day 1863. She died at the age of nearly eight months. Since Thomas died at the Chattanooga, Tennessee, Military Hospital 19 January 1864 of chronic diarrhea, it is unlikely that he ever saw his daughter and may never have known that she had been born. Records also show that Thomas was captured by the Confederates at Liberty, Tennessee, 5 March 1863, confined at Richmond, Virginia, and paroled prior to 22 March 1863.

Both Almedia and Matilda remarried, and Ephaim T. REES of Denmark was appointed guardian of Sarah Jane who seemed to have made her home with her grandmother and step-grandfather, Alex and Jane WATKINS. On 5 September 1874 Ephraim T. REES made a final report and asked to be released of his duties inasmuch as his ward, Sarah J. HINDS "only surviving heir of Thomas HINDS," was now of age and the wife of John MONDY. Nothing more appears regarding her until 16 August 1893 when she became the wife of David Conner CAMPBELL under the name of Jane MUNDAY and gives as the names of her parents; Thomas HYNDS and Almeda THROOP.

David and Jane became the parents of a daughter, Beulah CAMPBELL, who married Offie THORNTON. Mrs. THORNTON met her death as a result of the Murphysboro, Illinois, tornado in March of 1925, leaving two daughters in the area who readily gave consent to have the body of their great grandfather and others of this family re-interred. This was done on Wednesday, July 11, 1973, by Richard PYATT of the Pyatt Funeral Home of Pinckneyville.

Two small and one adult burial found would account for Joseph, Eliza, and Mary J., Thomas' grave, of course, being marked by a stone. Ida E. may have been buried in Pinckneyville as her mother was known to be living there at one time. Much to Mr. Pyatt's surprise and that of the mine employees assisting in the work, at the depth of seven feet an iron casket was unearthed bearing the well preserved remains of Thomas HINDS, Jr. The viewing glass was removed, and pictures were taken of his remains which were clothed in his soldier suit. He was a man of moderate size, and it was plain to see that he had clear, blue eyes.

In settling the estate in August of 1864 the probate judge allowed Alexander WATKINS the amount of \$70.00 "To money paid on transportation of corps from Chatanooga." So it would seem that the body was dressed and put in the iron casket at Chatanooga and brought back to Perry County for burial.

Late in the afternoon of July 11, 1973 all of the remains in this burial ground were removed to the Galum Presbyterian Cemetery located in Four Mile Prairie in section three, township six south, range three west, approximately three miles south of Pinckneyville. Ironically, they were all re-interred just a few steps away from Sarah Jane and her daughter. The coal company had memorial markers placed at the graves, giving names and dates for each. Now these graves which were unknown and neglected for more than one hundred years are being taken care of by the cemetery association and decorated by loving hands on Memorial Day and other times.

MORE ON IRON CASKETS

Florence Hutchison, 629 S. Diamond, Jacksonville, Illinois 62652

Probably the bodies found in air-tight iron caskets, recently reported, are bodies that had highly infectious diseases, in view of the Official Rules of the Illinois State Board of Health for the Transportation of the Dead from Points in Illinois, in force January 1, 1906, Based on an Act Providing for the Regulation of the Embalming and the Disposal of Dead Bodies, ...approved May 13, 1905. This law undoubtedly extends backward in time to the Civil War, but I have not researched this. I am reporting this information found on the back of an Original Transit Permit No. 28542, for Transportation of Corpse.

Rule 1. The transportation of bodies dead of small pox or bubonic plague is absolutely prohibited.

Rule 1A. The transportation of bodies dead of any contagious or infectious disease is prohibited unless the body has been prepared for transportation by a licensed embalmer holding a license as such, issued by the Illinois State Board of Health.

Rule 2. The bodies of those dead of Asiatic cholera, yellow fever, typhus fever, diphtheria (membranous croup), scarlet fever, erysipelas, glanders, anthrax or leprosy, shall not be accepted for transportation unless prepared for shipment by being thoroughly disinfected... .

After being disinfected as above, such body shall be enveloped in a layer of dry cotton, not less than one inch thick, completely wrapped in a sheet securely fastened, and encased in an air-tight zinc, tin copper, or lead-lined coffin or iron casket, all joints and seams hermetically sealed, and all enclosed in a strong, tight wooden box, etc.

I would conclude from these fragments of information that bodies not wrapped in sheets, but in iron caskets were those thoroughly disinfected and hermetically sealed, but not shipped, hence their features were visible through the glass that the discovered caskets seemed to have. The Jacksonville Genealogical Society is working on lists of deceased persons whose remains were shipped out of Morgan County for publication in the near future.

* * * * *

1900 CENSUS

Mrs. Peggy Tuck Sinko, Supervisor Local and Family History, Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610 writes as follows:

The September 1976 issue of Historical Methods Newsletter (pp. 201-212) contains an informative article by Robert G. Barrows entitled "Instructions to Enumerators for Completing the 1900 Census Population Schedule." Mr. Barrows has transcribed the instructions given to enumerators, which describe, often in great detail, how census sheets were to be filled out, and how certain questions were to be interpreted. Of course, many enumerators did not follow these instructions completely, but knowing what the answers are supposed to indicate, may help solve certain problems relating to understanding census records.

The instructions to enumerators for earlier censuses are included in a volume by Carroll D. Wright and William C. Hunt, The History and Growth of the United States Census (Washington, DC, 1900; U.S. Serial Set No. 3856). This work was reprinted in 1966 by the Johnson Reprint Corp. of New York. Historical Methods Newsletter is published quarterly by the University Center for International Studies and the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh.

* * * * *

Wales genealogist working for Mrs. Rachel Lundeen, ISGS member, found this interesting item in the Malverley Shorpsire marriage register for 1755 wherein the "parson" had entered a marriage as follows:

"This morning I have put a knot, No man could do it faster,
'Tween Matthew DODD; a man of God and modest Molly FOSTER."

It's No Joke, Witching for Bodies Is a Grave Concern

By Judith Joy

The water witcher has his peach and hazel twigs to determine where to dig a well and there are those who use welding rods to tell where a body lies buried.

Like the water diviner, the grave dowser isn't really sure why it works, but it seems to. "Not everyone can do it," says M.E. "Mox" Spurgeon as he walks slowly back and forth in an old Randolph County cemetery near St. Leo's hill. In his hands he holds a pair of welding rods he has inserted in homemade wooden handles.

"This has been called the loneliest cemetery in Illinois," says Mrs. Spurgeon watching her husband's progress, "Dr. Fisher's grave is supposed to be the only one here, but we don't think it is."

As Mox walks back and forth, the welding rods cross each other every so often, indicating the locations where others are supposed to be buried. Dr. Fisher's grave sits atop a slight rise under an old cedar tree. An historical marker indicates that the pioneer physician died in 1822 after a long career during which he established the first hospital in Illinois.

The rods turn downwards again near the doctor's grave. Is Mrs. Fisher buried beside her husband? The Spurgeons think so.

Elizabeth "Lib" Spurgeon and her husband are local history buffs and there probably isn't a country cemetery in Perry or Randolph Counties they haven't tramped around in. Mrs. Spur-

geon is also an expert genealogist and has helped trace the family trees of many old Perry County families.

Through their interest in old cemeteries, the Spurgeons heard about the welding rod technique and Mox decided to try it himself. It seemed to work for him and he has been doing it as a hobby ever since.

It was about four years ago that a rather sensational discovery sparked their interest in grave dowsing. In March 1973, Lib Spurgeon was asked to assist in the search for descendants of a Sgt. Thomas Hinds Jr. who had died at Chattanooga of chronic diarrhea during the Civil War.

Hinds was buried in the old Watkins Cemetery near Denmark which was about to be strip mined by Southwestern Coal. The company had hired Richard Pyatt, who, like the Spurgeons lives in Pinckneyville, to locate the graves and see about moving the remains to a new resting place. However, permission must first be granted by the relatives; if there were any.

Pyatt, who operates funeral homes in Pinckneyville and Nashville, has a lot of faith in the dowsing technique and uses it regularly to locate graves for the coal company or for relations who want to put up a stone over an unmarked grave. Pyatt says the welding rods detect a chemical change in the soil conditions — not the actual body. Therefore the technique works even if the body and coffin have completely rotted away.

Usually, says Pyatt all that is

left is about a one-inch layer of silt that indicates where the coffin was. Sometimes, he added, you may find a few teeth and buttons or perhaps some the brass hardware from the coffin. But that is usually all that is left of the mortal remains. If the grave is to be moved, some of this dirt is placed in a small box and reburied at a new site.

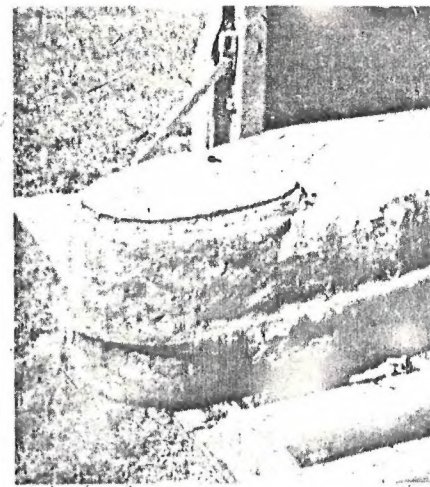
When Pyatt was searching for the grave of Sgt. Hinds, he didn't expect to find much of anything. He had dug down seven feet when he struck something hard, which sounded metallic. It turned out to be a cast-iron casket containing the body of Sgt. Thomas Hinds, Company D., 110th Illinois Infantry.

Through the glass plate, which was inserted in the top portion of the coffin, Pyatt could view Hinds' face with its lifeless blue eyes. Both the boy and the Union uniform were in a remarkable stage of preservation, even though the blue fabric was covered with mold.

Hinds had died at the military hospital in Chattanooga on Jan. 19, 1864 at the age of 29. Through research, Mrs. Spurgeon discovered that he and his family had moved to Perry County in 1834 from Delaware.

On July 11, 1973, Hinds' body was reburied by Pyatt at the Galum Presbyterian Cemetery three miles south of Pinckneyville after permission was given by two great-granddaughters who still lived in the area. Ironically, notes Mrs. Spurgeon, Hinds was reburied near his daughter, Sarah Jane, who was a child by his first marriage which had ended in divorce.

Mrs. Spurgeon wrote up the incident and her article appears in the March 1977 issue of the Illinois State Genealogical Society Quarterly. Appended to it are some comments on iron caskets indicating that they may have been used to ship those who died of some infectious disease. Since they contained glass plates and were hermetically sealed, it was not necessary to open them for



CAST IRON COFFIN — The boy died in Chattanooga, was buried in Randolph County. The burial was when the cemetery was moved

viewing the remains at the time of the funeral. This would also account for the remarkable state of preservation in which the body was discovered.

The Southwestern Coal Co. purchased new memorial markers for Thomas Hinds and the others who were moved from Watkins Cemetery and these are now being cared for by the cemetery association. Although few graves undergo such an abrupt disturbance, relatives often try to relocate old family graves to erect a stone or when burying other family members nearby.

Lester Campbell, who is in the monument business in Nashville, also uses welding rods to help locate these old graves. "I've had some success," commented Campbell, "but not 100 per cent."

Campbell first heard about the welding rods ten years ago from a man in DuQuoin. He had purchased a set of the brass rods, which sell for about \$10 now. They are used commercially, he noted, to pick up gas and water lines.

Campbell says it takes some practice to acquire the skill, but about 90 per cent of people can do it if they keep their hands about two feet apart and one foot away from their bodies and hold



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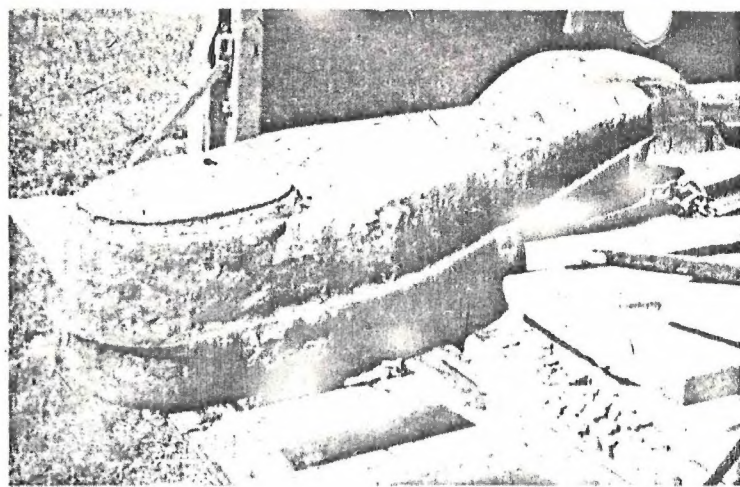
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CAST IRON COFFIN — The body of a Union soldier, who died in Chattanooga, was buried in this cast iron coffin in Randolph County. The burial was later located by dowsing when the cemetery was moved prior to strip mining. (Richard Pyatt photo)

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Campbell says it takes some practice to acquire the skill, but about 90 per cent of people can do it if they keep their hands about two feet apart and one foot away from their bodies and hold

the rods bent down slightly.

Asked why the technique works, Campbell said the rods somehow indicate a disturbance in the ground, which relates to the interruption of the magnetic field. Even a groundhog hole will cause the rods to turn, indicating that the presence of a body has nothing to do with the process. Campbell also noted that the divining rods had been used in Viet Nam to locate underground tunnels which were hiding places for the Viet Cong.

Although the technique may not be perfect, both Pyatt and Campbell find the divining rods a useful tool of their trade. Since early cemeteries have few written records, locating a grave can be a real challenge.

Sometimes the actual remains may be found, but often there is little real evidence of a burial. The degree of preservation, says Pyatt, is often determined by the soil type in the cemetery. So whether it is the authentic grave of old aunt Minnie or an abandoned groundhog burrow, may be somewhat difficult to determine without actually digging up the burial site.

But for those who have faith in divining, such proof would be unnecessary; while those who are disbelievers probably would not be convinced anyway.





THERE'S ONE HERE — The welding rods cross, indicating a burial, as M. E. "Mox" Spurgeon walks slowly through an old graveyard. Spurgeon look up grave dowsing

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12A Centralia (Ill.) Sentinel

Sunday, July 10, 1977



ANYONE CAN DO IT — Rex Franklin of Vergennes tries his hand at dowsing near the grave of Dr. George Fisher in St. Leo's Hill in Randolph County. Dr. Fisher's grave, which dates from 1822, is the only marked one, but the Spurgeons believe other bodies were buried on the same site. Franklin walked back and forth over the area several times but nothing much happened.